

BADGER™



WHO ARE THESE GUYS, ANYWAY?



The Badger is **Norbert Sykes**, a Vietnam veteran suffering from an extremely rare multiple personality disorder, which has its origins in childhood trauma. Seven great personalities in one. The personality most frequently inhabited by Norbert, indeed almost *exclusively preferred*, is the Badger, a self-styled crime fighter who rides the highways and by-ways of America, meting out bloody justice to jaywalkers, ticket scalpers, indifferent teenaged fast food clerks, in fact, *any damn body he feels like because he's CRAZY!*

Badger is an expert at hand-to-hand combat. He began his training in Shorin-ryu but has since gone on to master dozens of obscure, esoteric, arcane, not to mention obtruse martial arts, the likes of which you seldom hear about.

He can also talk to the animals — just like Dr. Doolittle, or Lorne Greene. Only Badger gets better results than Lorne Greene.

Badger lives with **Ham the Weather Wizard** in a castle south of Barneveld, Wisconsin. Ham and Badger met while both were inmates at a state mental hospital. Through cunning and chicanery, Ham has amassed a considerable fortune.

LAST ISSUE: Badger and his buddy **Riley Thorpe** had a run-in with **Ron Dorgan**, who unleashed a "delayed death touch" and zapped Badger real good. Now Badger and Riley have to go to the South China Sea and "persuade" Dorgan's master, **Hop Ling Sung**, to undo the damage...

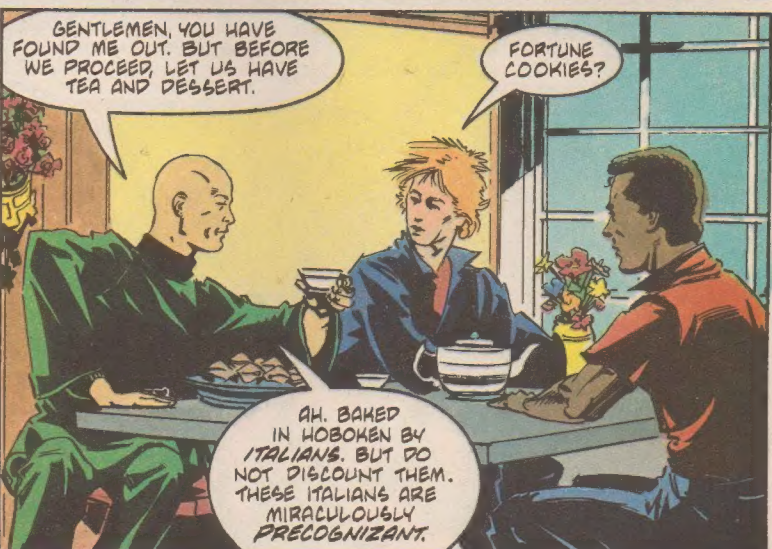
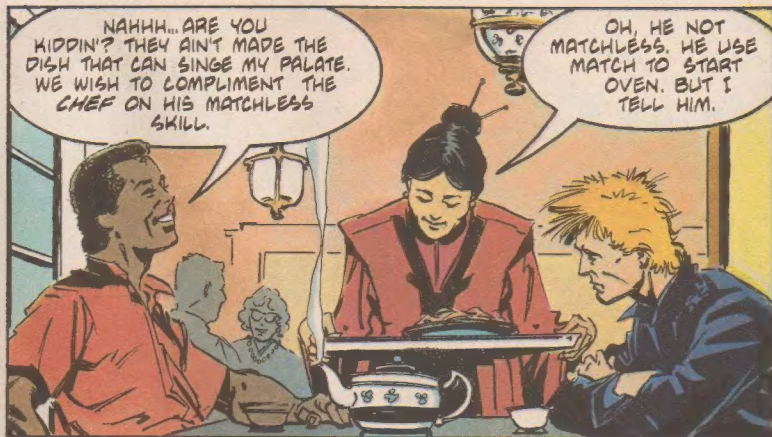
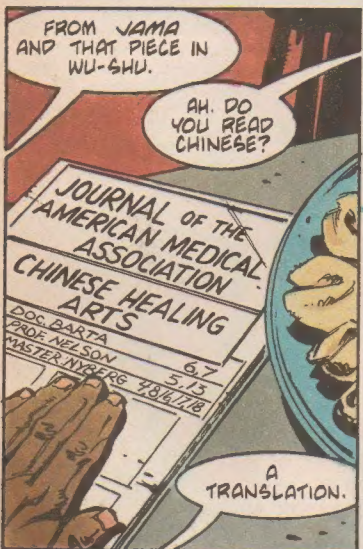
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A FIRST COMICS PUBLISHING PRODUCTION

FIRST
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BADGER™

KILL OR BE KILLED

mike baron
script

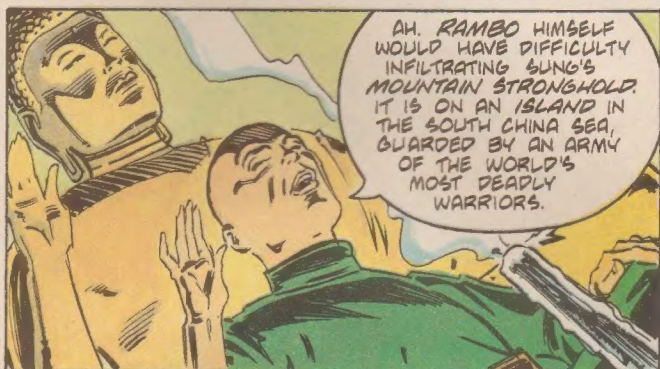
bill reinhold
artist

willie schubert
letters

linda lessmann
colors

rick oliver
edits

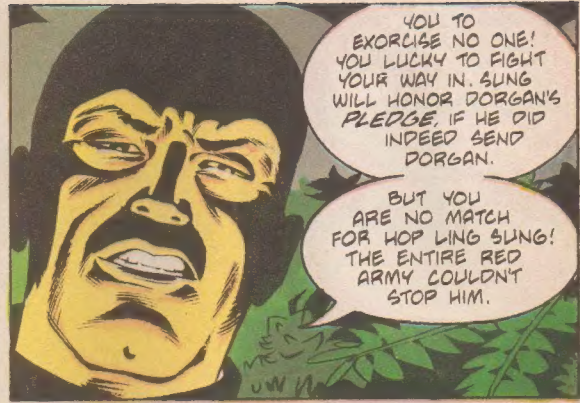






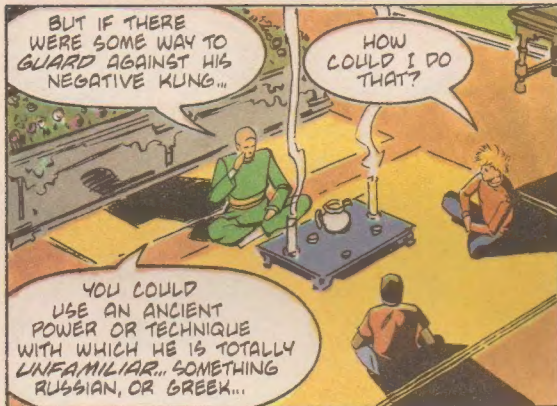
GREAT! NOT ONLY DO WE HAVE TO FIGHT OUR WAY INTO HIS STRONGHOLD, WE GOTTA EXORCISE THE BASTARD WHEN WE GET THERE.

BADGE, BABY, WE'RE GOING TO LOVE IT.



YOU TO EXORCISE NO ONE! YOU LUCKY TO FIGHT YOUR WAY IN. SUNG WILL HONOR DORGAN'S PLEDGE, IF HE DID INDEED SEND DORGAN.

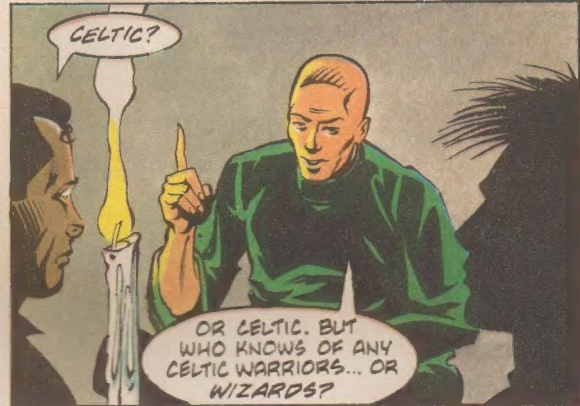
BUT YOU ARE NO MATCH FOR HOP LING SUNG! THE ENTIRE RED ARMY COULDN'T STOP HIM.



BUT IF THERE WERE SOME WAY TO GUARD AGAINST HIS NEGATIVE KUNG...

HOW COULD I DO THAT?

YOU COULD USE AN ANCIENT POWER OR TECHNIQUE WITH WHICH HE IS TOTALLY UNFAMILIAR... SOMETHING RUSSIAN, OR GREEK...



CELTIC?

OR CELTIC. BUT WHO KNOWS OF ANY CELTIC WARRIORS... OR WIZARDS?



BARNEVELD, WISCONSIN, THE FOLLOWING DAY.

YOU WANT WHAT, SIR?

I WANT YOU TO INVEST RILEY AND ME WITH THE POWERS OF ANCIENT CELT WARRIORS--JUST FOR A MONTH OR TWO!

BAH. YOU'RE TALKING NONSENSE.

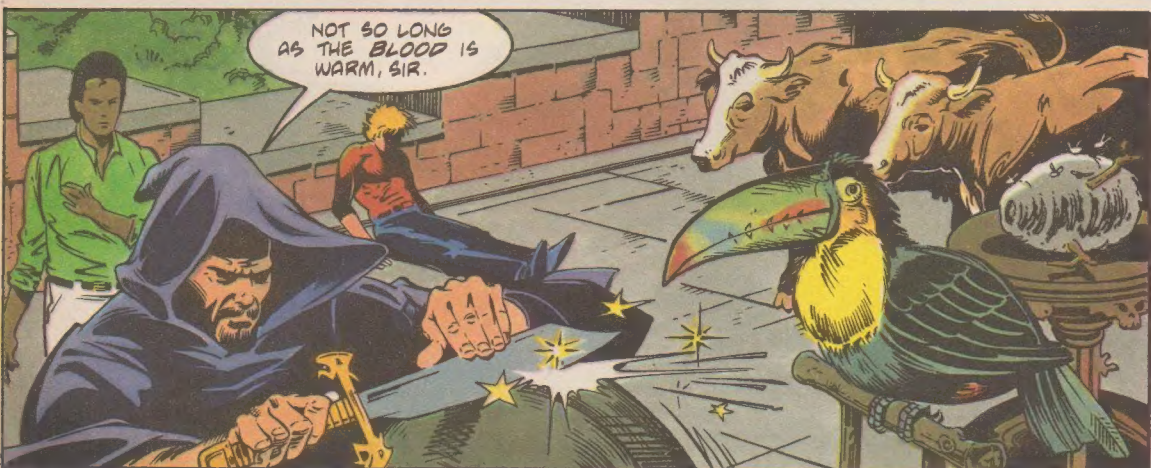
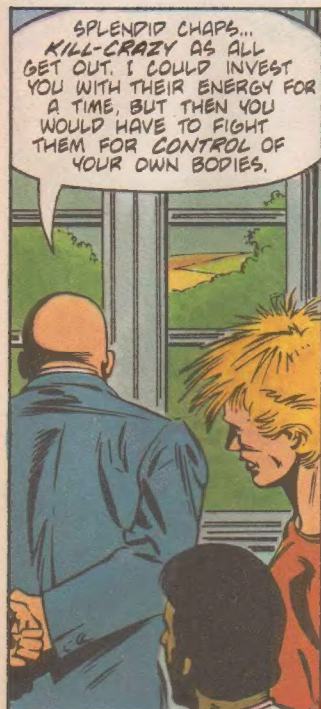


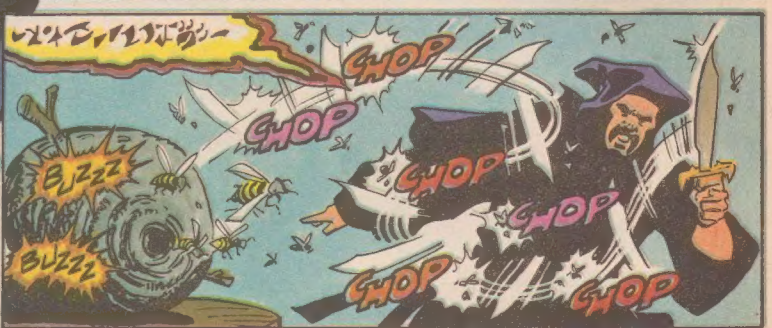
IN THE FIRST PLACE, YOUR AVERAGE CELT WARRIOR WAS NO MATCH FOR YOU OR RILEY ON HIS BEST DAY. THEY WERE RUNTS COMPARED TO YOU.

COME ON, HAM. WHAT ABOUT THE WARRIOR KINGS? DIDN'T THEY BOAST SOME HEAVY HITTERS?



THE WARRIOR KINGS... QUITE ANOTHER STORY. FORMIDABLE CHAPS INDEED, PARTICULARLY CRAZED EDGAR AND HIS HALF-BROTHER RODERICK THE INSATIABLE.







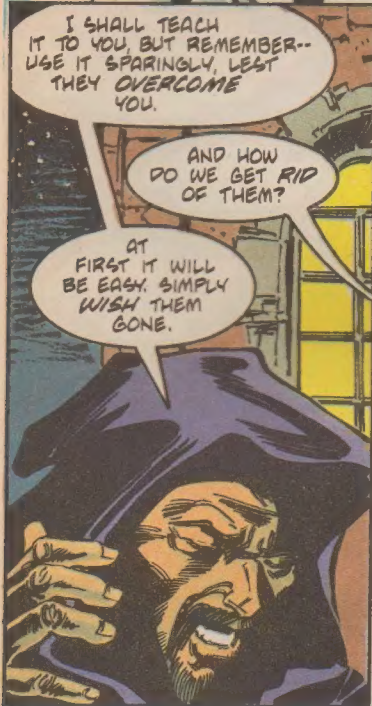
I FELT THAT...

RILEY-- YOU DID IT! HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN OUT TO LUNCH?



LISTEN-- YOU MAY INVOLVE THEIR POWER BY RECITING THE PHRASE, "AYO!" BUT YOU MUST DO SO SPARINGLY.

HOW'S THAT AGAIN?



I SHALL TEACH IT TO YOU, BUT REMEMBER-- USE IT SPARINGLY, LEST THEY OVERCOME YOU.

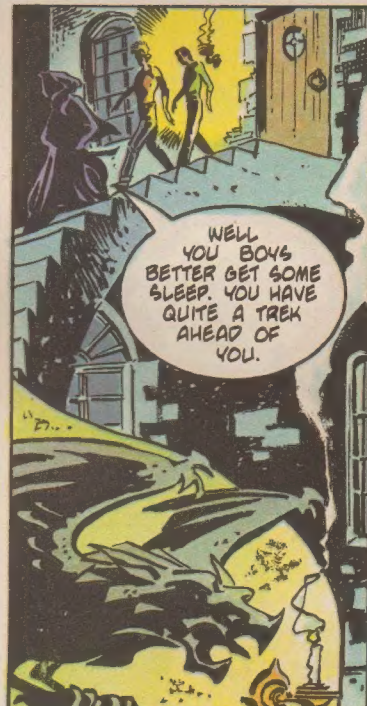
AND HOW DO WE GET RID OF THEM?

AT FIRST IT WILL BE EASY. SIMPLY WISH THEM GONE.



GIVEN ENOUGH TIME, IT WILL BE HARDER...

DON'T WORRY. WE'LL SAVE THEM FOR THE BIG SHOWDOWN.



WELL YOU BOYS BETTER GET SOME SLEEP. YOU HAVE QUITE A TREK AHEAD OF YOU.



GOOD NIGHT, EDDIE.

GOOD NIGHT, ROD.

Y'KNOW, EDDIE...

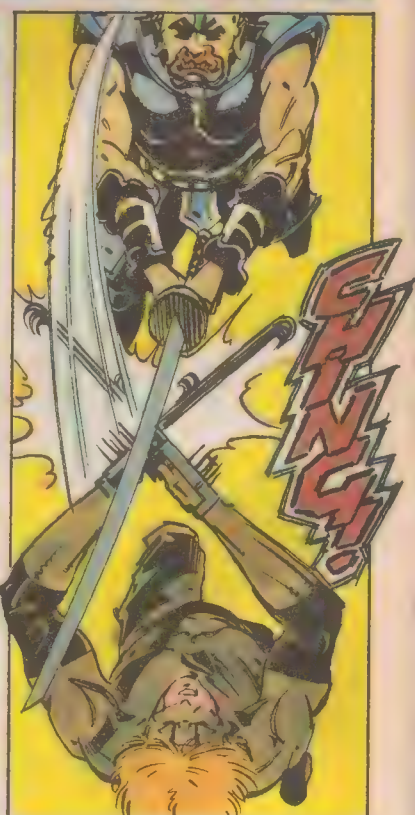
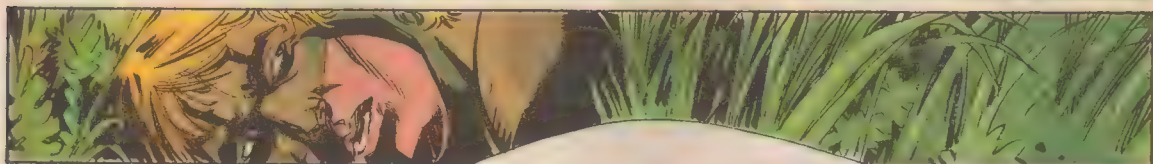
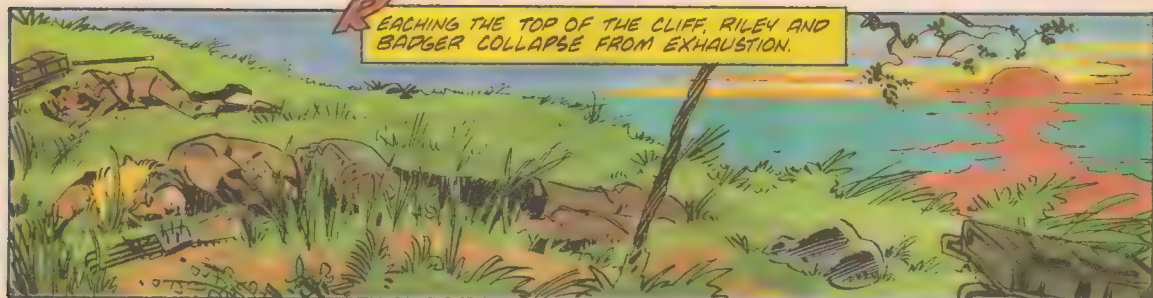
WHAT'S THAT, ROD?

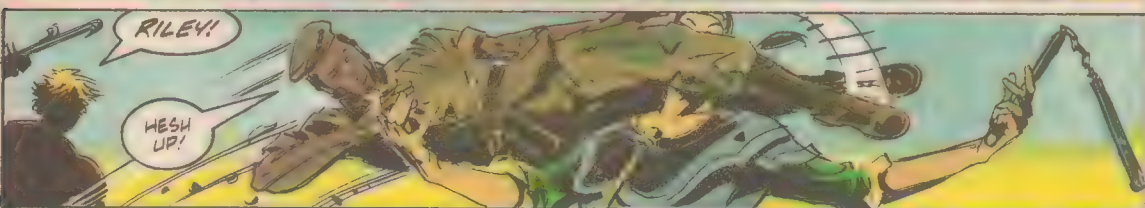
WHAT'S HE WANT WITH THAT TOUCAN? HE NEVER TOUCHED IT.





REACHING THE TOP OF THE CLIFF, RILEY AND
BADGER COLLAPSE FROM EXHAUSTION.





FIRST NOTES

SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL

Just the other day, our editorial coordinator, Rich Markow, came into my office and said, "How can we ever hope to find fresh, new talent if we don't look at all these unsolicited submissions and respond to them?"

I pushed aside the pile of papers on my desk, which then fell onto the heap of papers on the floor, which proceeded to slide casually into the Leaning Tower of Paper propped up against the wall and held in place by the power of hypnotic suggestion, which then jolted awake, realizing it was only paper and had no consciousness to speak of and therefore was not the least bit affected by hypnosis, careened wildly from side to side, and then finally succumbed to the force of gravity, burying the aforementioned Mr. Markow in the process.

"I give up," I replied, as he extricated himself from my intricate filing system, "how do we find fresh, new talent if we don't look at all these unsolicited submissions?"

"Come on, now — I'm serious!" he exclaimed seriously. "Don't we have an obligation to tell these people if their work is any good or not?"

"Would we be doing them any favors by telling them it isn't?" I asked. "Besides, what makes you think we don't look at them?"

Markow looked up from a stick figure rendered in crayon that would have rivaled the works of Picasso and retorted, "Well, I never hear anything about it."

"Sure you do," I quipped. "You know how we found Robb Phipps, the penciller on *Psychoblast*? Unsolicited submission. And Ron Lim, the artist we chose to take over *Badger* while Bill Reinhold works on the graphic novel? Unsolicited submission. And Eric Shanower's series of *Oz* graphic novels? It all started with an unsolicited submission.

"We try to look at every submission that comes in," I continued, "but we simply don't have time to respond to all of them. We pick out the ones that look good to us, and then we contact the artists and writers. We may ask for more samples or we may give them an assignment right away."

"But what about all these others?" Markow gesticulated wildly, slipping on a proposal for a superhero team with 113 major characters with special notations indicating which ones have superpowers, which ones are mutants, and which ones have neither superpowers nor mutations. "Shouldn't we at least send them a critique or a polite rejection?"

"Sit down, Rich." I gestured to a chair only partially buried in a "partial list of main characters" from a concept for a continuing series about "a number of individuals who all gain superhuman powers at the same time from a mysterious comet." (Sound familiar?)

"Let me tell you a story. Once upon a time, there was a comic book company that thought it would be a great idea to develop a form for evaluating unsolicited submissions. It had all sorts of useful categories, check boxes, and rating scales. The idea was that the editors and art directors could critique the work and then send it back to the writer and/or artist, who could then use this "constructive criticism" to hone their skills.

"And do you know what happened, Rich?"

"No," he replied cautiously, eyeing what appeared to be an abstract drawing of an eggplant with a mustache.

"There was only one thing wrong with the system: nobody could agree on an evaluation that remotely resembled a consensus, and we spent more time...

"There were only two things wrong with the system: nobody could agree on an evaluation that remotely resembled a consensus, and we spent more time evaluating unsolicited submissions than editing our regular, ongoing books, and some of them were so bizarre...

"Three things were wrong with the system... well, you get the idea."

"Okay," Rich conceded, "so maybe we can't critique them all. But what about a polite rejection?"

"What's a *polite* rejection?" I queried. "And without explaining *why* it was being rejected, what purpose would it serve?"

"To let them know we aren't interested?" he suggested.

"If we don't contact them, then we're obviously not interested," I countered. "Besides, I already ran a list of guidelines for submissions in one of my columns. I've already explained that we don't have the time or the staff to respond to every submission."

Rich brushed aside an exciting proposal to "co-publish" the exploits of a new "superer" team, and sighed, "Oh, in that case, never mind."

—Rick Oliver

FIRST IN SEPTEMBER

Lone Wolf and Cub #5: The Lone Wolf is challenged by Headless Sakon. By Kazuo Koike and Goseki Kojima. Cover and introduction by Frank Miller.

Badger #31: Badger must slice his way through an army of the world's most vicious kung fu killers. By Mike Baron and Bill Reinhold.

Evangeline #5: Black-market clones become the target of Evangeline's righteous anger. By Charles Dixon, Cara Sherman-Tereno and Ricardo Villagran.

Nexus #40: Nexus makes the mistake of getting personally involved with one of his victims. By Mike Baron, Steve Rude and John Nyberg.

Dreadstar #34: Dreadstar winds up running for his life from the pyrotechnic assault of Malchek! By Jim Starlin, Luke McDonnell and Val Mayerik.

Grimjack #42: A former champion discovers that winning means more than just a title when he stakes his own life against impossible odds. By John Ostrander and Tom Mandrake.

Psychoblast #3: Arrabella's insatiable lust for Brian Burke's psychokinetic powers climaxes in a battle to the death with the raw, unrestrained power of Psychoblast! By Steven Grant, Robb Phipps and Al Vey.

American Flagg! #48: Reuben finds himself skyjacked — onboard an unscheduled trip to Mars! Part two of a very special four part AF! saga by Howard Chaykin, Mindy Newell and Paul Smith.

Dynamo Joe #15: A giant version of Wolf-1 emerges from the central core of the Mellenares, and the Dreamers make an astounding discovery about the true nature of the enemy. By Doug Rice, Phil Foglio, and Brian Thomas.

Chronicles of Corum #7: Mike Baron, Jackson Gulce and Kelley Jones reunite Corum with the forces of Law as the battle mounts against Queen Xiombarg and the hordes of Chaos.

Hawkmoon: The Sword of the Dawn #3: Seeking passage on their quest for the Sword of the Dawn, Hawkmoon is enslaved by murderous pirates. By Roger Salick and Raphael Kayanan.

Jon Sable Freelance #55: "The Trojan War" continues as Sable's investigation into arms shipments to the IRA leads him to the mysterious Jacklight. Part two of three by Mike Grell and Tony Salmons.

THE FIRST CHOICE...

AMERICAN FLAGG!
BADGER
CORUM
DREADSTAR
ELRIC
EVANGELINE
GRIMJACK
HAWKMOON
JON SABLE, FREELANCE
LONE WOLF AND CUB
NEXUS
PSYCHOBlast
SHATTER
WHISPER



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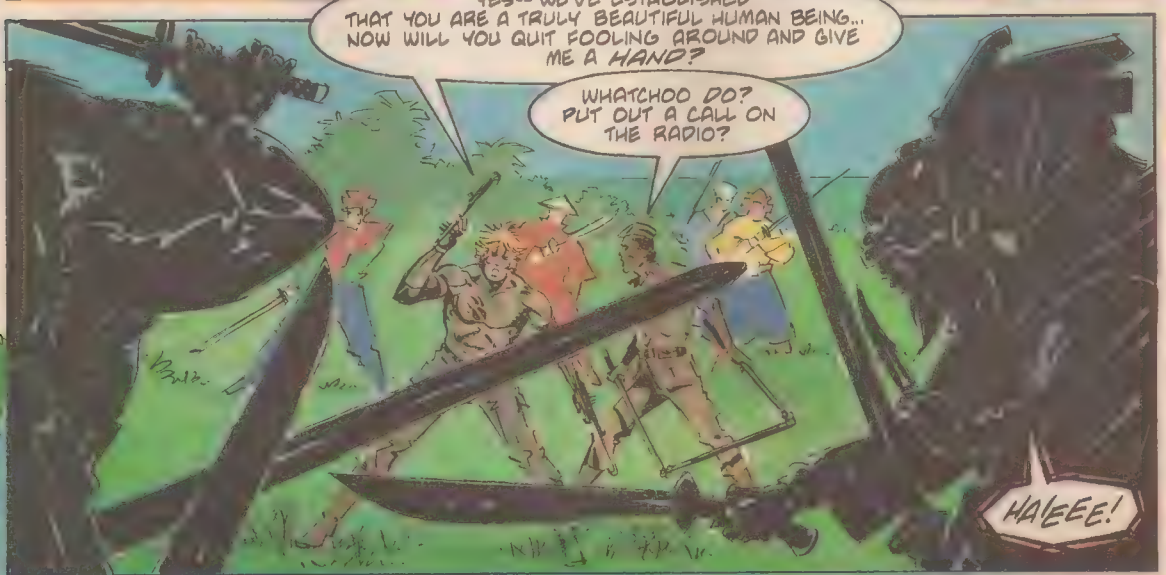
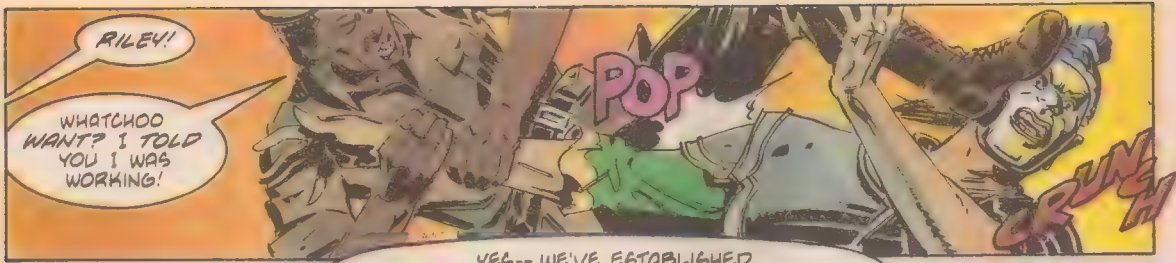
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THE BATTLE RAGES THROUGHOUT THE MORNING.

HEY, MAN
(PUFF)-- WE AIN'T GETTIN' NOWHERE.

HEY, MAN--
MAYBE IT'S TIME
FOR THE SECRET
WEAPON.

KEEEE!!

HUNGG!



OKAY!
(PANT! PANT!)
SAY THE
SECRET
WORD!

I DON'T KNOW
THE SECRET WORD, MAN!
(PUFF) HE'S YOUR
WIZARD!



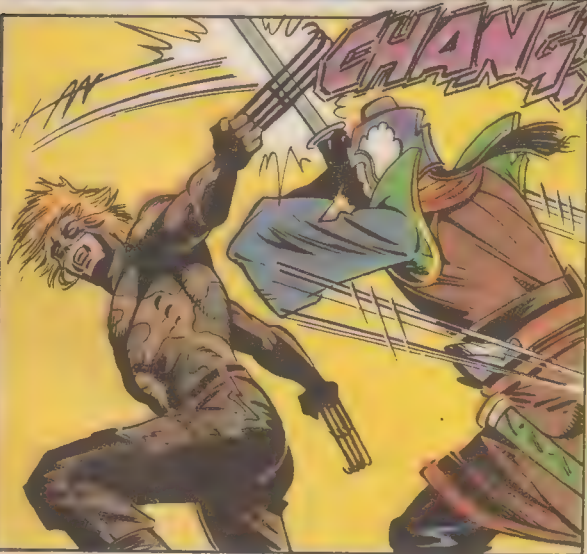
SCREW IT!
WE DON'T NEED
THE SECRET
WORD!

YOU
MORON! YOU
FORGOT THE
SECRET
WORD!



I DID
NOT! LAWYER! LAWYER,
LAWYER, LAWYER!

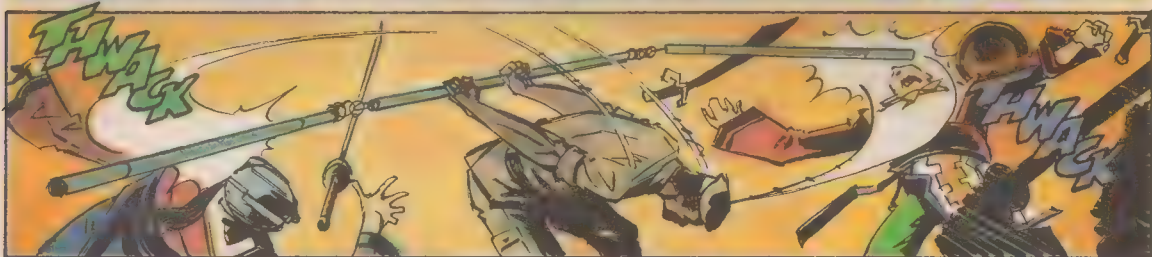
YAHUH!

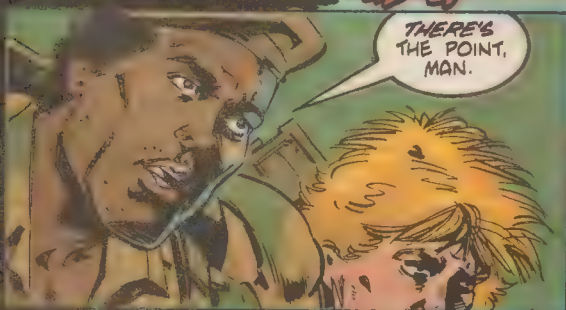
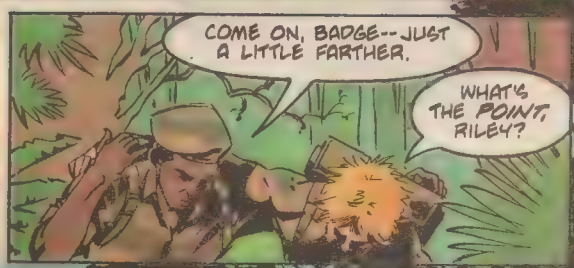
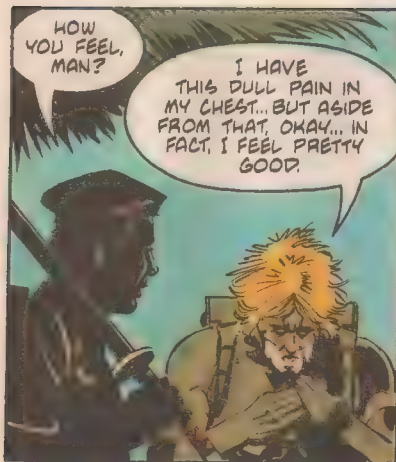


CHANGE!



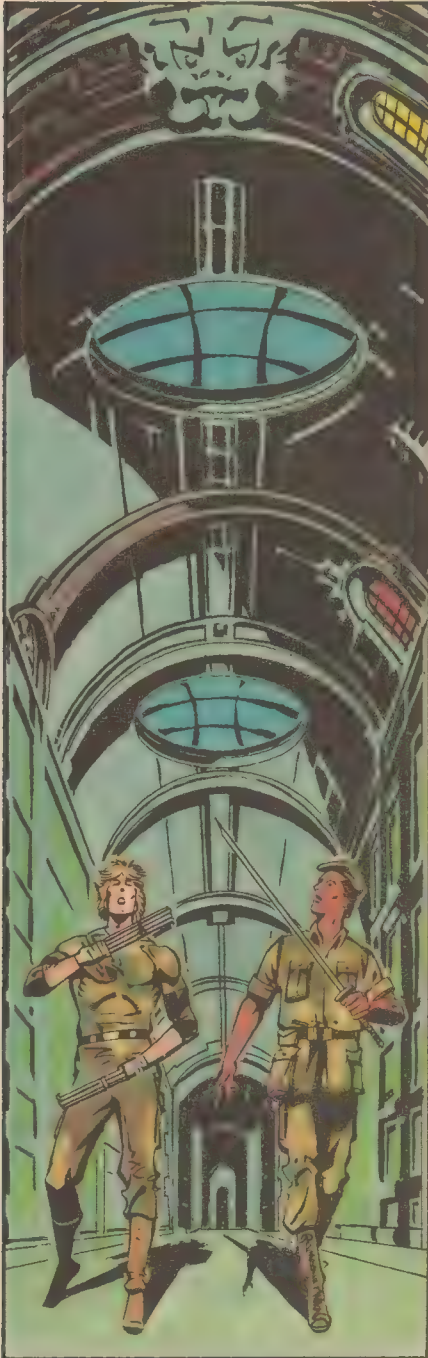
THUMP

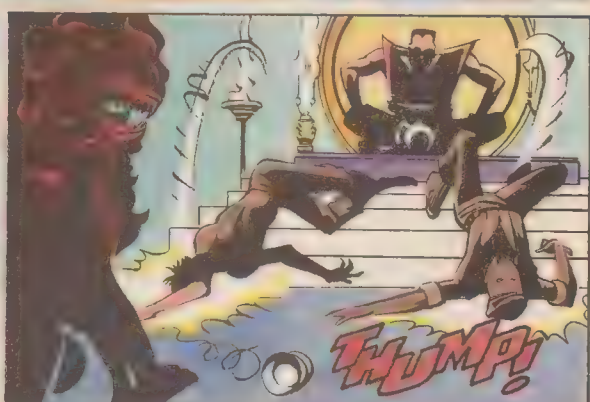
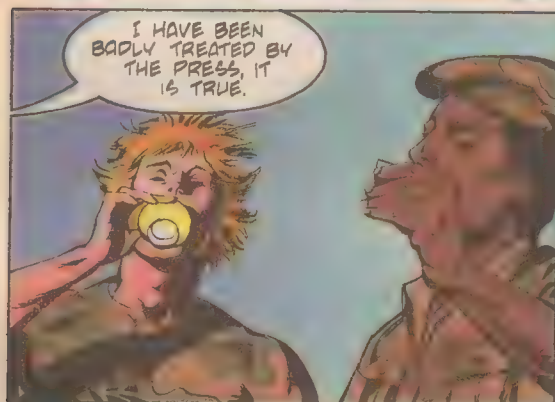
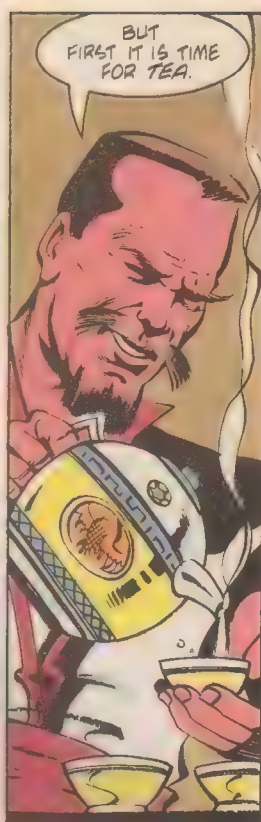




RILEY,
THIS IS WEIRD
STUFF... I DON'T SEE
ANYBODY.

MAYBE
THEY WENT TO THE
MALL TO RENT
VIDEOS.





HE DOESN'T GET ANY YOUNGER.
HE JUST GETS BETTER.

Sable

RETURN of the HUNTER



by MARV WOLFMAN
& BILL JAASKA

COMING IN NOVEMBER FROM

FIRST
COMICS
COUNT ON US

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO AMERICAN FLAGG!?

AND WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?



THAT'S WHAT REUBEN FLAGG WANTS TO KNOW—
AND NOW HE'S GOING TO GET SOME ANSWERS!



NUMBER 49

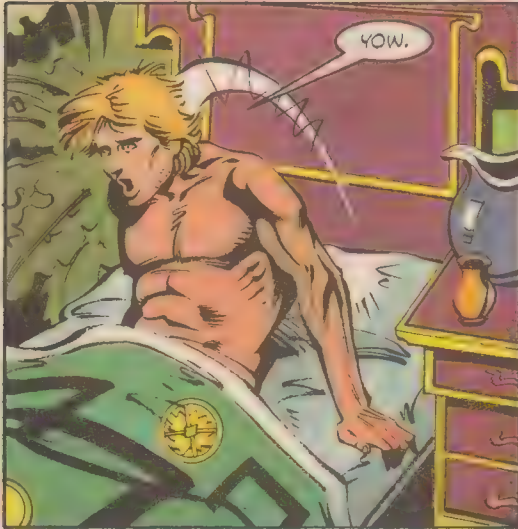
BY HOWARD CHAYKIN,

MINDY NEWELL, & MIKE VOSBURG.

ON SALE NEXT MONTH!

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FIRST
COMICS
COUNT ON US.







LARRY,
YOU'RE A
LOUSY HOST.
WHO'S YOUR
TURKEY?



YOU ARE A
CHURLISH GUEST OR YOU
WOULD WELCOME THIS
OPPORTUNITY.

YOU HAVE
ALREADY MET OUR
CHAMPION...

**RON
DORGAN!**



HELLO
AGAIN

THIS
TIME I
WON'T HOLD
BACK.



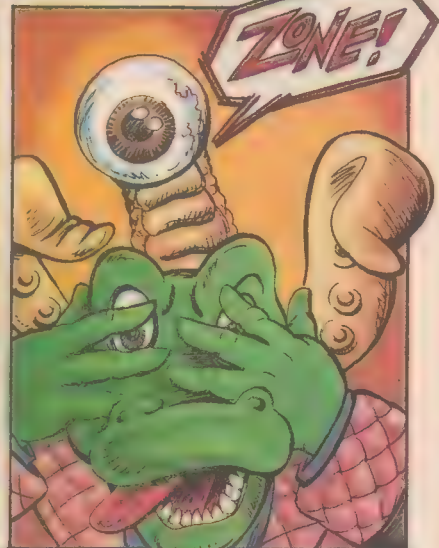
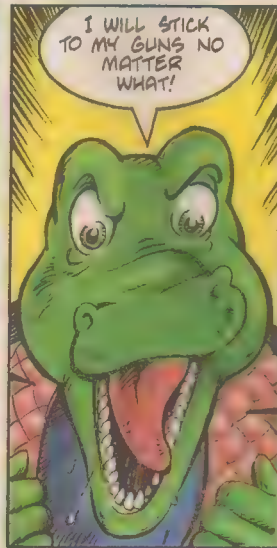
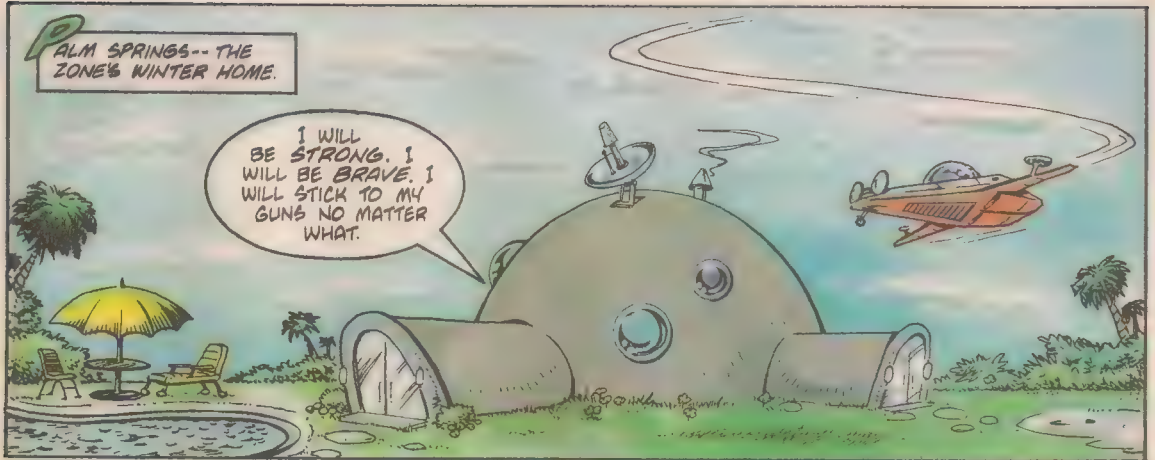
THIS TIME
I'LL TEAR YOUR
HEART OUT.



THE SPELL,
MANN-- THE
SPELL!

I
FORGOT!

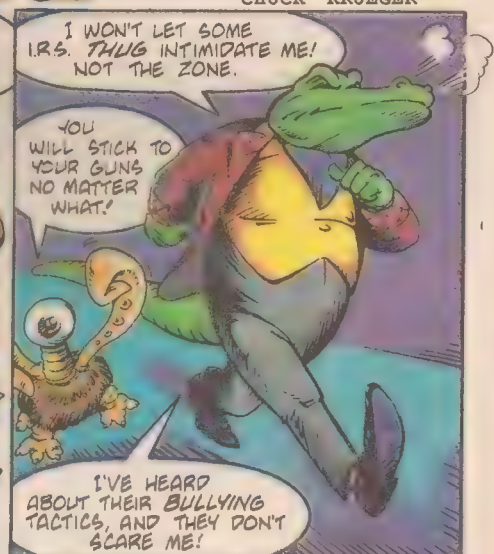
next: SHOWDOWN in the
SOUTH CHINA SEA

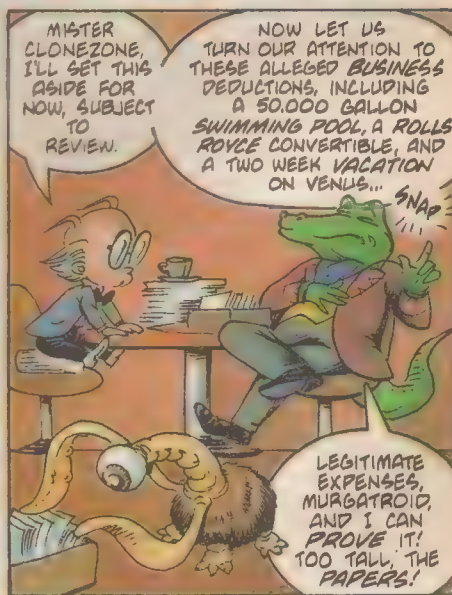
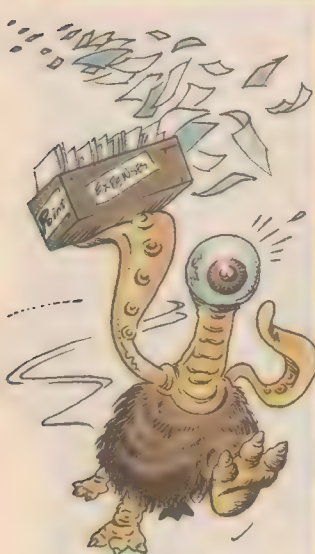
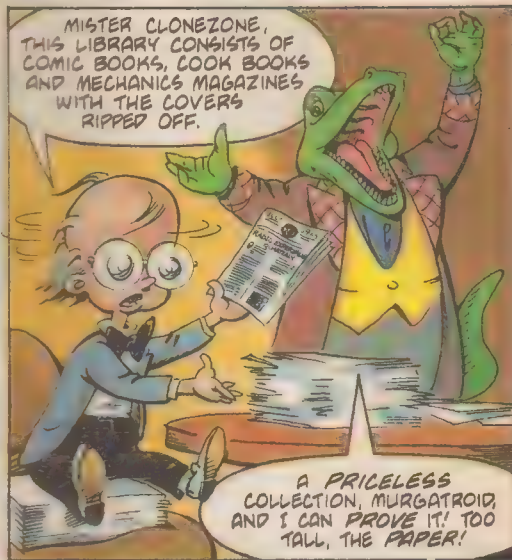
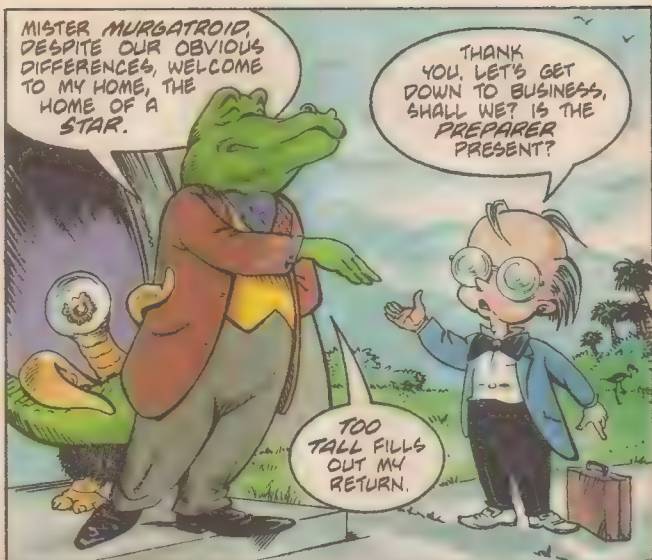


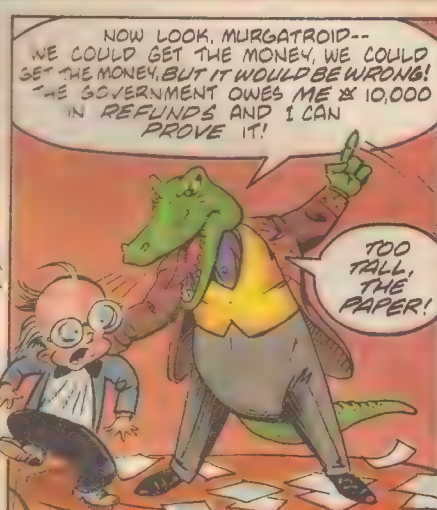
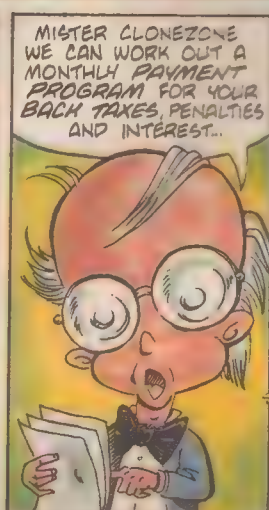
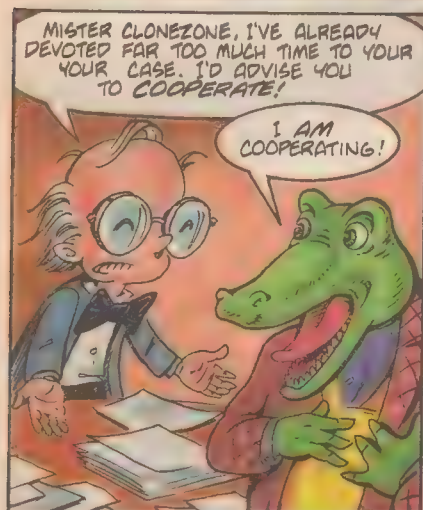
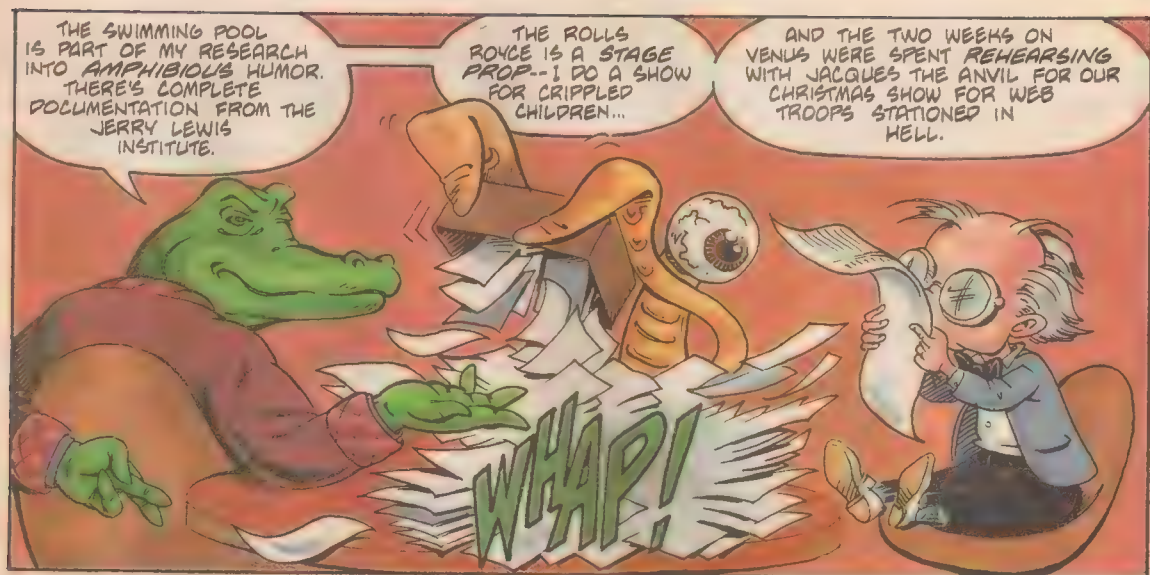
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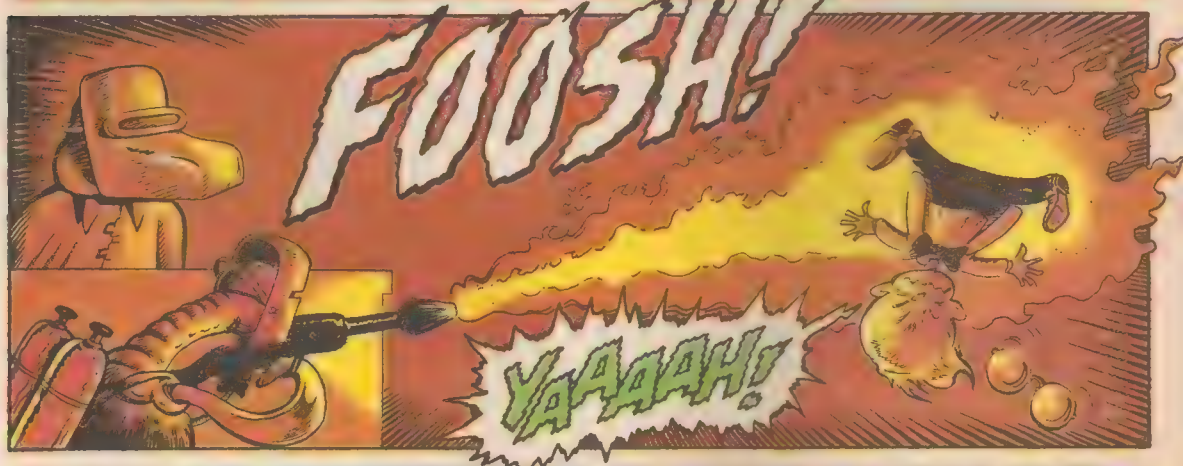
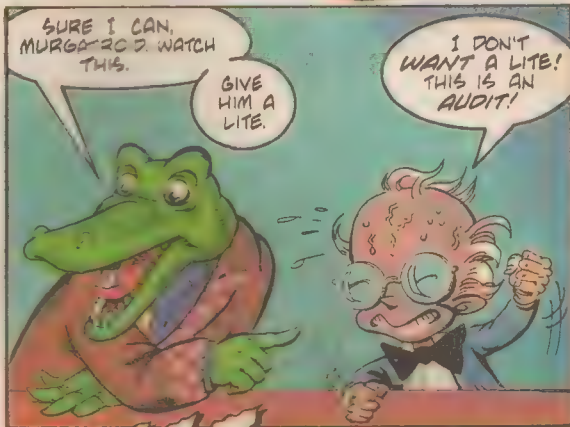
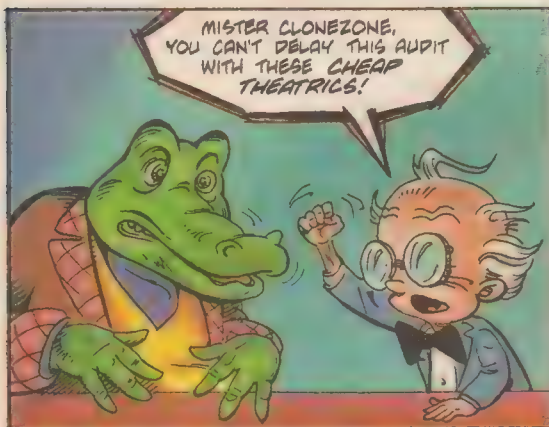
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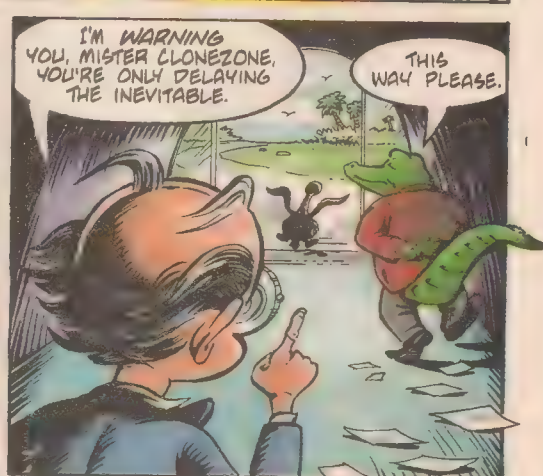
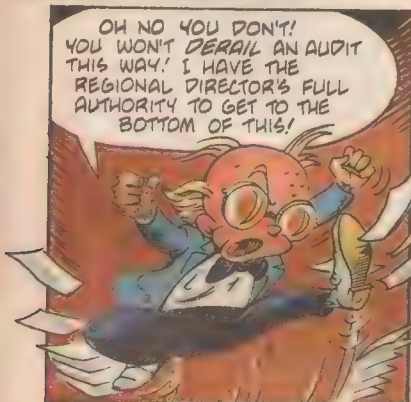
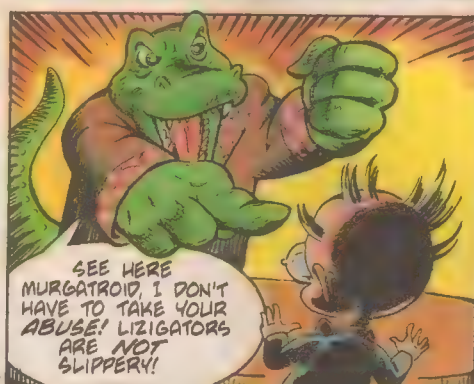
MIKE BARON... testimony
ALEX WALD... evidence
WILLIE SCHUBERT... steno
JULIE SCZESNY... baliff
RICK OLIVER... executioner
dedicated to
CHUCK KRUEGER

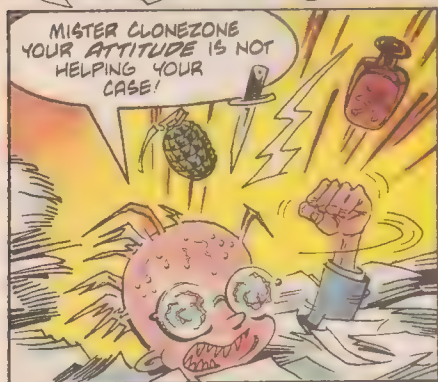
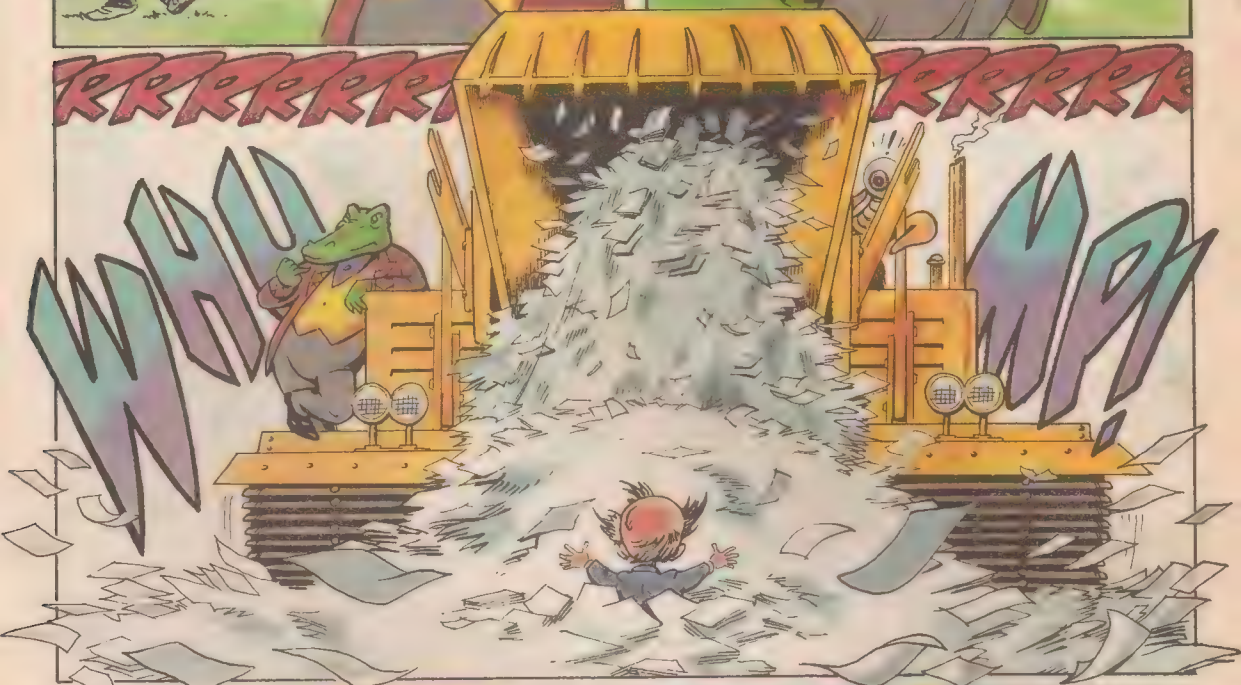
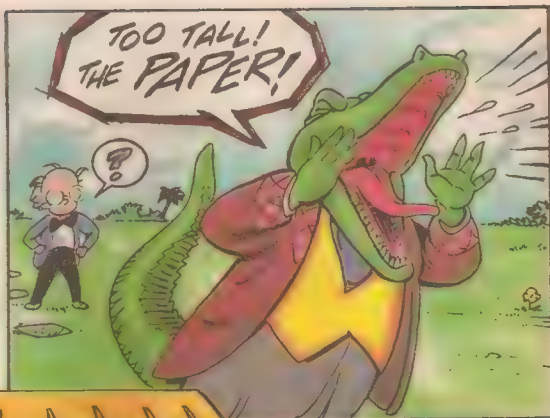
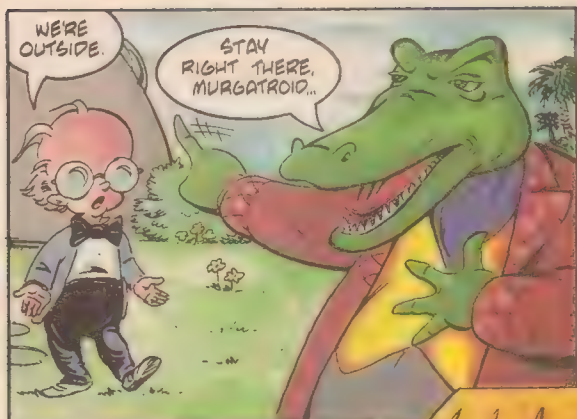












Dear
LARRY,:

C/O FIRST COMICS
435 N. LASALLE
CHICAGO IL
60610

Dear Editor,

Hoorray, Hoorray. I'm going to get a letter published! Now, what should I say? Oh, no, I'm finally going to get a letter printed and I can't think of anything to say. AAARGH!

Arthur Crosby
5200 Robinwood Road
Louisville, KY 40218

Dear Larry,

"Bad Beer" was the best. Woof Woof! I came into my dorm at two in the morning. My friend, Chris, was sitting on my bed, surrounded by empty cans of Kokanee (local B.C. brew). "Come drink with me," he slurred. I was really tired and declined. Seeing my awesome willpower, he shoved Badger #28 in my face. I sat down and read. In Canada! Violent! Beer-oriented! And Pierrel Wack-adoo, I was hooked. By the time I saw the silhouette of the demon tearing the hunter apart, I thought "I need a beer." To my surprise, the same thoughts were echoed by Ted, Yeti and Badger. That clinched it, reaching for a brew, I told Chris that I'd drink with him.

By five, we were reading the comic aloud, like a play. Chris got to be Badger, but I got to be the chainsaws.

I haven't had as much fun since Lord Weterlauckus got eaten.

Conan Walker Purves
3400 Richmond Road
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada

*Kids, don't try this at home!
Unless you are of legal drinking
age, of course.*

Dear Mr. Baron,

Badger has a better

supporting cast than almost, no, any other comic on the market, with the possible exception of Nexus. Why don't you spotlight some of these characters in one-shot or continuing adventures? They don't even have to be "adventures." I would just like to see some of them more often, and listen to some of their wonderful dialog. You do write great dialog.

Anyway, how about some "Tales of Riley" ("Life of Riley"), or the Wombat, or Yeti? What ever happened to Connie, or Cobra Crisp? Whatever happened to Don Diego's Digitalis? How about Wontedonk or Meldrum? Especially Meldrum.

Just trying to help. I love your work.

Chris
3389 Woodland Pky.
Columbus, IN 47203

Well, let's see. We covered Yeti in issue #28, and right now we're in the middle of a three-parter featuring Riley. So give us enough time, and I'm sure those other guys will show up again.

Dear Larry,

I'm not sure what's happened; I just want the ol' Badger back. Issue 28 was a start in the right direction but a trifle incoherent (like this letter).

Now I was looking back through my complete series (yep, I got them all — even the crossovers) and I got to thinking; when was the last time we saw Ham called "Hammeglystwythlebragxxaxol" or even seen the guy for more than a page?

And what happened to Riley? Now and then I see a guy that might be him, but where's the patter? The walk?

Last of course, is Badger

himself. When was the last time he complained — in amazement, no less — about seeing "red stuff" that had leaked out, inspiring him to greater, maniacal efforts. How's Emily? And then there was Pierre.

One way to explain Pierre is that he is the most supernatural of Norbert's various personality and that it absorbs the evil essence of anyone nearby who's even marginally named "Pierre." Heck, at least it's an explanation that makes twisted sense.

Of course, there's also the two personalities no one talks about: Alice and Gastineau.

So, in closing, let me hope your doors never close!

Blayne Johnson
2413 First Avenue #P-1
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

See my response to "Chris" as to the status of Riley. Better yet, read this issue again! As for Pierre, he showed up in #28, along with the aforementioned Yeti. And as you probably know by now, your "twisted" explanation is pretty close to the mark.

As for Ham, look for him to play a major role in an upcoming two-part story by Mike Baron and Ron Lim.

Dear Larry,

I guess the real question isn't "Why am I writing to these guys?" or "Why do I waste my money on those silly comic books?" but "Why have I never gotten around to subscribing?" I fell in love with the series when a friend showed me issue one back in the Capital days. And for the most part I have been consistently pleased by the series.

But now for the things I haven't been as pleased about, and some of the improvements

"Why are you letting so many story ideas die? What happened to the Reverend Wallace Wallop? How much did Senator Kasten raise for paraplegic pigs? What happened to the Badgermobile?"

I've noticed.

After reading No. 27, I'm happy to see that Ham, Daisy and Riley still exist. Ham hadn't been seen conscious since he passed out in issue 20. Let's be serious! If I remember right, the Badger wouldn't even have ever been taken off the drawing boards if it weren't for Baron's original desire to do a book on Ham (see the "Origin" section of the Badger profile on page 25 of issue 3).

And what happened to the threats of Lord Weterlakus, made in issue 13? (Or for that matter, the threats of Crusader Grabbit in No. 3?) What did KEPCO ever do about the Uranium refinery?

And while we're on the subject of issue 13, whatever happened to continuing story lines? You almost got my hopes up at the end of 26, but 27 wasn't nearly as strongly linked to 26 as 13 was to 12, or as 7 was to 6. Now THAT was a classic continuation.

While I'm on the subject of endings, why are you letting so many story ideas die? Whatever happened to the Badger and the Reverend Wallace Wallop? That had some real potential. How much did Senator Kasten raise for paraplegic pigs? Why did the Badger and Don Diego Digitalis never go after the stolen car? (Or at least why weren't we shown that adventure?) Whatever happened to the Badgermobile? It could have gotten a new radio, you know. And whatever happened to the Yak? I see now that at least the Yeti is back, but there sure are a lot of unanswered questions in these and other issues.

Speaking of unanswered questions, when did the Badger begin carrying a gun? (Gee, wizz. I see what he means when he says he doesn't usually take to Bobs!) It sure seemed con-

venient in No. 23 when he failed to kill IBOB's demon, but it sure is out of character. And when did Baron resort to such cliché panels as the first one on page 3 of No. 27? (And why did you guys stop numbering your pages?) And another comment about being out of character: with the exception of the end of issue 24, the Badger just hasn't been his old crazy self. I miss the insanity. PLEASE BRING IT BACK! (It was refreshing to see the late Mr. Oates and the late Senator Dirkson in No. 28. We haven't heard enough of them lately.)

As long as we are bringing things back, I'd like to see a return to the days of 28 pages of Badger instead of 20 pages of Badger and 8 pages of bad filler. I hated Zoomtown and think that Clonezone was a big step down from that. The Boris The Bear takeoff in the beginning of No. 27's Clonezone was pathetic, but then that's what I've come to expect from the last pages of my Badger every month. I would rather see the Badger go back to 28 pages of QUALITY material every month, as it was in the "olden days," or 20 pages of Badger and 8 pages of Ham, as has been suggested more recently, instead of the 20 pages of OK material and 8 pages of mindless garbage that it has been since September '85 or so.

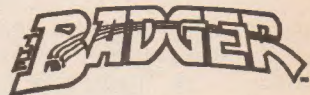
Let me end this letter on a high note. I still find The Badger to be a quality product, and I'll continue to buy it for a long time unless it really goes downhill. I'll also more than likely continue to buy Lone Wolf and Cub, unless it turns out to be less than its first issue would indicate (just don't put Clonezone or Zoomtown in the back!). You guys are doing one of the best jobs on the market. Just don't lose sight of the Badger that

used to appear every other month to entertain, educate and amuse the rest of us crazies who spend our money on it.

P.S. I hate coleslaw, and you're going to have a hard time convincing me that Pierre is a real man.

Barry R. Tice
821 E. Walnut #309
Columbia, MO 65201

Well, Barry, I hope the current three-part "Grand Master" story satisfies your craving for continued storylines. And I'm sure you'll be relieved to discover that Clonezone is only six pages long, not eight.



Cover
Painting by
**Steve
Rude**

NEXT MONTH: The concluding chapter of "Grand Master," by **Mike Baron** and **Bill Reinhold**, with a special cover painting by **Steve Rude!**

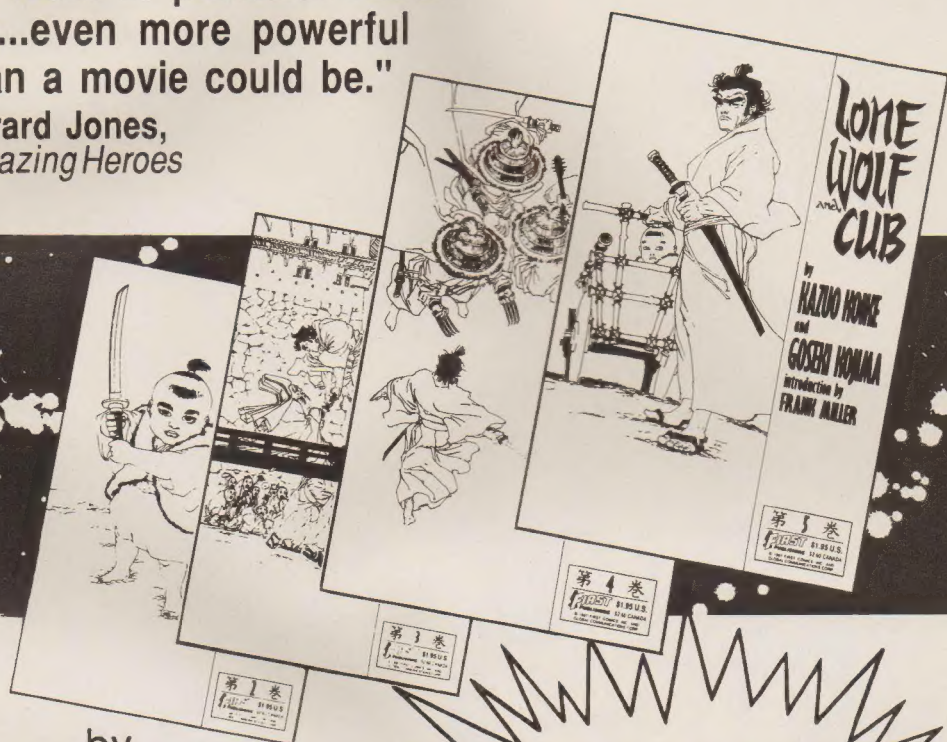
—Rick Oliver

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